

Oh, the things to do gratis in the Granite

By Richard P. Carpenter
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New Hampshire is working to woo visitors, so if you are thinking about or planning a visit to the Granite State, here are a few freebies tourism promoters have come up with:

■ Throughout the state, there are free shows for many ages and interests. In Portsmouth, for instance, the 32d annual Prescott Park Arts Festival, through Sept. 30, presents theater, a children's series, concerts, dance, and musicals. This year's show is "Oliver!" Thursdays-Sundays through Aug. 20. (Visit www.prescottpark.org.)

Arts Jubilee will move its annual 7 p.m. Thursday night Summer Outdoor Concert Series to the base of the north slope of Cranmore Mountain this July and August because of road construction in North Conway and Cranmore's offer to host the three performances. (Visit mvvevents.com or call 603-356-7501.)

Manchester, meanwhile, has two free concert series. "Buskers on the Bricks" runs Monday-Friday, noon-1 p.m., through Aug. 31, alternating between City Hall Plaza and Hampshire Plaza. "Thursday Night Live" from 7-9:30 p.m. is a free outdoor concert series in Veterans Park. (Visit www.intownmanchester.com.)

■ The John Wingate Weeks Historic Site in Lancaster offers glorious 360-degree views of New Hampshire's Presidential Range and the Green Mountains of Vermont and is a popular picnic spot. There is no charge to visit this mountain aerie, although there is a small fee to tour the home of Weeks, a US representative, senator, and secretary of war in the Harding and Coolidge administrations. On Thursday nights in summer, there are free family-oriented shows. (Visit www.nhstateparks.org, then click on Visit a State Park, then Historic Sites.)

The Mariposa Museum in Peterborough features folk art, tex-



TOM COCCHIARO/GREATER PORTSMOUTH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Members of the Newmarket Militia muster with a vintage flag at the John Paul Jones House in Portsmouth, N.H., in 2004.

tiles, costumes, art, puppets, toys, and instruments from six continents. A "First Friday in 'Our Town'" program gets you in free on the first Friday of each month (this Friday, July 7, and Aug. 4, and Sept. 1). (Visit www.mariposamuseum.org.) Other museums with free admission: the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College in Hanover; Webster Cottage, also in Hanover; the Lawrence L. Lee Scouting Museum in Manchester; and the New England Ski Museum in Franconia.

■ You get free cake at the Portsmouth Historical Society's annual birthday party for John Paul Jones, often called the father of the American Navy. Next Sunday, July 9, on the grounds of the John Paul Jones House, there will be a concert by the Seacoast Wind Ensemble, with cake for all. The museum will be free on that day. (Visit www.portsmouthhistory.org.)

■ The state is also free of sales tax and filled with free lakes and trails for recreation, as well as sites for animal viewing. Why, there is even a town named Freedom.

For more ideas, go to www.summerinnh.com.

extinct for 50 years. From Aug. 10-25, Fitzpatrick will be leading an \$1,875 canoe trip on the Big Salmon River in the Yukon Territory for Wilderness Inquiry, which specializes in trips for people with all abilities, including those with disabilities. The price includes canoes, tents, and meals.

Call 800-728-0719 or visit www.wildernessinquiry.org.

Three's no crowd

The third guest in your state-room sails free on 12 South Seas sailings on Regent Seven Seas' Paul Gauguin, Sept. 2-Dec. 13. Seven-night voyages begin at \$1,795 a person.

Call 800-285-1835 or visit www.regentexperience.com.

When not included, hotel taxes, airport fees, and port charges can

Love the city, leave the car

The five Apple Core hotels in New York are offering a Leave the Car at Home package for \$159 a night. Guests get a complimentary breakfast, two unlimited-ride Metro cards, and round-trip transfers for Kennedy or La Guardia airports. The offer is valid through July.

Call 800-567-7720 or visit www.applecorehotels.com/promotions/summer.

Advice for July

Hotwire.com notes that in July so many people have fled to the beaches that big-city hotels, with air-conditioned rooms and luxurious appointments, often lower prices. Hotwire says you can frequently find four-star hotels in big cities like Los Angeles and Washington going for around \$100 a night. (And you know which discount site they hope you use.)

Paddle the Yukon

A naturalist named Jim Fitzpatrick spotted something special as he floated in a canoe in the swamps of Arkansas: an ivory-billed woodpecker, thought to be